



The Ontario Hepatitis C Assistance Plan

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



WHAT IF I CONTRACTED HEPATITIS C BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 1986 AND JULY 1, 1990?

Ontario will provide assistance to people infected between January 1, 1986 and July 1, 1990 under the \$1.1 billion Settlement Agreement approved by the courts in Ontario, Quebec and B.C.

WILL THE MONEY AFFECT PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS LIKE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, TRILLIUM DRUG BENEFITS OR FAMILY BENEFITS?

No. This payment will not affect your eligibility for other programs such as social assistance, Trillium drug benefits or family benefits.

IS THIS MONEY TAXABLE?

No.

CAN SOMEONE APPLY FOR A DECEASED FAMILY MEMBER?

Yes. To be eligible, hepatitis C or a hepatitis C related illness must be recorded as the cause of death. Details are available by calling the toll-free number listed below.



WHAT IF I CONTRACTED HCV FROM ANOTHER PERSON, NOT DIRECTLY THROUGH THE BLOOD SYSTEM? CAN I APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE?

Yes. The primary-infected individual — your spouse, partner or parent — must first satisfy eligibility requirements under the program.

WHAT IF I AM DENIED ELIGIBILITY?

Your application can be independently reviewed. You will receive a letter from the ministry explaining the review process.

DO I NEED A LAWYER TO FILL OUT THE FORMS?

It is up to you whether you want to consult a lawyer for any reason. By applying for this program, you will keep all your rights to any future court action.

**Call the Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care
toll-free 1-877-222-4977**

TTY 1-800-387-5559

- for an application form
- for help filling out the form
- if you have any problems getting the information you need, or
- with any other questions about the assistance program.



AM I ELIGIBLE FOR THE ONTARIO PLAN FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE?

You are eligible if, before January 1, 1986, or between July 2, 1990 to September 28, 1998:

- you contracted hepatitis C virus (HCV) through the blood system in Ontario;
- you were infected with HCV by a spouse, partner or parent who received blood or blood products in Ontario; or
- you are the personal representative of an estate of an individual who has died of hepatitis C and contracted the virus through the blood system in Ontario during the period covered by the Ontario Plan.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE?

The application for assistance has two forms.

On the **Applicant form**, you provide personal information, including your address and phone number, the names of doctors who know about your hepatitis C infection, and the name of the hospital(s) where you received the blood transfusion or blood product.

You must sign the form to authorize the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to verify and obtain information, such as transfusion records and whether you have tested positive for HCV. You must consent to the ministry collecting, using and disclosing such information to determine your eligibility. On your behalf, an official at the ministry will ask the hospital to search through its transfusion records. The

ministry will check with Canadian Blood Services to see if the hepatitis C virus was in any of the blood you may have received.

If records are incomplete or unavailable, the ministry may contact your doctor to confirm your eligibility.

Send the signed Applicant form in the enclosed postage paid return envelope to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, OHCAP, c/o 77 Wellesley Street West, Toronto, ON M7A 1N3.

You must provide the doctor who is most knowledgeable about your hepatitis C condition with the **Physician form** and the other return envelope. The doctor will fill it out, confirming that you have been diagnosed with hepatitis C, and send the completed form to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

WILL THE INFORMATION I SEND TO THE MINISTRY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Yes. All of the information that you, or others on your behalf, send to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is subject to the strict confidentiality rules of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

HOW MUCH WILL I RECEIVE?

Each person infected with hepatitis C through the blood system can now expect assistance of \$25,000. This is based on Ontario's estimated share for the 1986-1990 Settlement Agreement.

WHEN WILL I GET MY MONEY?

If you are a new applicant and have the required documentation, submit it with your form and you will get your cheque very soon after we receive your form. Depending on the availability of hospital transfusion records and other documentation, it could take longer before we are able to issue a cheque. If the ministry has difficulty getting or verifying records, we will let you know.

If you have already been deemed eligible for OHCAP compensation and have received the initial payment of \$10,000, you will likely be eligible for the additional compensation of \$15,000. You will receive a letter from the ministry providing details regarding this additional compensation.

DO I HAVE TO SIGN A RELEASE TO RECEIVE THE \$25,000?

No, but if you are eligible for assistance, you will be asked to sign an agreement that acknowledges the Ontario government's payment to you. This agreement is included with your application. You can choose to sign and return this agreement with your application or wait until your eligibility has been confirmed.

You can still take any court action you may want to pursue. If, however, you obtain a court award against the government, the \$25,000 payment will be taken into account.